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SUBJECT: CCP AND PNC MOVE TOWARD ELECTORAL ALLIANCE

REF: A. A. ACCRA 00627

[1](#)B. B. ACCRA 00623

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D)

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Ghana's two minor political parties with seats in Parliament, the Convention People's Party (CPP) and the People's National Convention (PNC), continue to move toward an "electoral alliance" ahead of this December's election. The two parties share similar ideologies; the unresolved issue concerns selection of a joint slate for Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates. Media speculation has CPP leader, Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom, heading the ticket with Dr. Edward Mahama of the PNC serving as running mate. However, a senior PNC official said the issue has not yet been settled, and that hardliners in the party may oppose the deal. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) Speculation has been building in recent days that the CPP and PNC would form an alliance ahead of the December election. In separate meetings with Ambassador Pamela E. Bridgewater, both candidates, Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom of the CPP and Dr. Edward Mahama of the PNC, said that cooperation was likely. (Reftels). At a May 14 meet the candidate event, Dr. Nduom carefully responded to a reporter's question about a merger, saying that "it had come to the point where the CPP and the PNC will work together." News reports quote Dr. Nduom as saying he would lead the alliance into the election, with Dr. Mahama as his running mate.

[1](#)3. (C) POLOFF and POLFSN met May 15 with Alhaj Ahmed Ramadan, National Chairman of the People's National Convention. Ramadan said that a final decision by the PNC to conclude an electoral alliance had not been made, pending a meeting next week of the party's National Executive Committee. Media speculation on Nduom leading a joint ticket came about after a weekend meeting between officials from the two parties. During a vote at that meeting, a PNC committee member switched positions and voted with the CPP to select Nduom, allowing some to draw the conclusion that he had been selected. Ramadan said that the matter of leadership was not yet settled, and noted that some party loyalists, particularly in the party's base region of Northern Ghana, would likely oppose a joint effort with the CPP. Rather than a full merger, Ramadan thought that an electoral alliance would result. Under an alliance, the parties would run common candidates for President and Vice President and not run competing parliamentary candidates in the same constituencies. Ramadan further explained that an electoral college had been proposed to bring together representatives from both parties to select a common flag-bearer and vice presidential candidate, and to name candidates for parliamentary seats. Asked what would happen if the process stalled, Ramadan said that in a worse case, "the party would go into the election as the PNC." Media reports on May 16 describe dissension within the PNC over the proposed alliance and anger that the National Executive Committee was not more

involved.

¶4. (SBU). Both the CPP and the PNC share similar both ideological positions and Nkrumahist roots. Both embrace a social democratic agenda, with populist electoral messages. The PNC's strength is in the far north of Ghana, where it holds four parliamentary seats, while the CPP's strength is in the Central and Western Regions, where it won three seats in 2004. Ramadan admitted that in most constituencies the combined support of the two parties would not be sufficient to win many additional seats, and that it was necessary to draw voters from other parties, particularly the opposition National Democratic Congress. He said this would be difficult, and the party risked losing its support through an alliance. He noted that in 2004 the CPP won its three seats in constituencies where the ruling National Patriotic Party (NPP) chose not to run candidates, giving the CPP a large advantage. It appears this will not happen again in 2008, as the NPP has put forth candidates in the constituencies held by the CPP.

¶5. (C) COMMENT: The CCP and PNC have similar ideologies, but different regional bases-- conditions that make an alliance a natural fit. Mahama may be willing to forego his own presidential candidacy, a major hurdle to an electoral alliance, although party loyalists may balk at the loss of party identity. While early indicators suggest an increase in support for the CPP, it remains unclear how this will impact the 2008 elections. END COMMENT.  
BRIDGEWATER